PEACE AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

BY

Professor Abdel Moneim El-Mashat
Faculty of Economics and Political Science.
Cairo University

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Introduction:

For the first time since early this century the Middle East is quieter than it used to be. Regional open conflicts look as if they have been resolved. However, internal conflicts and tensions are growing to an alarming degree. Therefore, while the end of the cold war has had its positive impact on the reduction of inter-state conflicts in the Middle East, it did not increase the level of domestic tranquility. This lack of domestic tranquility and the increase in societal instability may escalate because of the intrinsic correlation to external factors into regional or international conflicts.

In the Middle East, people lived for the last 80 years on the belief that the Arab-Israeli conflict is the trigger of all other conflicts. Hence, a feeling of optimism spread in the Middle East after the Israelis reached agreements with both the Palestinians and the Jordanians. More than that the Economic Summit for the Middle East and North Africa in Casablanca, October 30 November, 1994, increased the level of optimism. However, the history of the Arab - Israeli conflict requires some precautions. Since the Balfour Declaration of November 2rd 1917, conflict against external powers has been regionalized and shifted into a conflict between the Arabs

on the one hand and the Jews, and then Israelis, on the other. The Declaration, initiated by the British, called for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for Jewish people .... it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and the religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."(1)

Between 1917 and 1993 all regional, and even international conflicts in the Middle East were blamed on the Arab - Israeli conflict. However, the Camp David Accords of 1978, the Egyptian - Israeli Treaty of 1979, the Palestinian - Israeli Declaration of Principles in 1993 known as the Gaza - Jericho Declaration of Principles and the Cairo Declaration on the Implementation of the Declaration of Principles are some attempts to resolve the conflict and hence reduce tension and conflict in the area.

It may be interesting to mention that, the Iranian revolution of 1979 has diversified the Middle East conflicts into a variety of inter-states disputes and fights. Series of wars, fights and battles which threatened regional and international peace and security took place.

Since the change in the structure of the international system and its transformation into a New World Order, there is an increase in the volume and intensity of internal conflicts. This raises questions concerning causes and types of regional and intra-state conflicts.

On the onset of the discussion one may determine the framework

of analysis of Middle East conflicts as follows :

1) The shift in the international system from a bilateral system to a system which has not been determined yet, raises many questions concerning the patterns of alliance, the volume of interactions and weight of different forces in relation to each other. The frequencies and the intensities of internal and regional conflicts will be determined, in this case, by the perception of the parties concerned of the structure of the international order. The outcome will be conditioned by whether or not the parties perceive the US as the only dominant actor. The multi-polar system in the making process will limit to a great extent the policy of "benevolent hegemony' initiated by the USA. In this case, the types and levels of conflicts in the Middle East will be determined differently.

2) Related to this is the fact that the weight given to the economic and technological interactions over strategic relations creates real challenges to regional actors. The establishment of the European Union (EU), the European Economic Association (EEA), the North American Free trade Association (NAFTA), and other regional economic coordination groupings represent a new challenge to Middle East actors. These actors did not change, yet, their emphasis from strategic to economic interactions. If they do, one may expect lower levels of conflicts and more possibilities for regional rapprochement.

3) The emergence of new values and new areas of emphasis in the new international order such as human rights, environment protection, liberalization and the respect of the rights of minorities present other challenges to the state system in the Middle East. In most cases, state apparatus is dominant and powerful and is a main source of any policy. The new values and initiatives require substantial concessions on behalf of the state. Being rigid as they are, nation-states in the Middle East may risk their stability against any concession concerning their authority and apparatus. This may agitate, alienate and motivate certain sectors in the society, especially minorities and marginalized groups, to challenge state authority and hence, indulge into conflicts and violence.

4) This potential wave of conflicts and violence may expand to influence inter-Arab politics and present viable sources of deep inter-state conflicts even between states members in the same sub-regional council. Contrary to this, it may create opportunities for more cooperative interactions with old and traditional adversaries. Hence, the changes on both the international as well as regional levels do not mean only negative developments. They may also mean positive understanding among major actors in the Middle East.

-I-
PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL CONFLICTS

The Arab - Israeli conflict was a unifying factor among the Arab states and within the Israeli society. Between 1984, when Israel was established, and 1978, when the Camp David Accords were signed, the Arab - Israeli conflict played a major role in unifying Arab positions and stands against Israel. Central regional powers such as Egypt played a centripetal role in reaching Arab national consensus against the regional intruder, i.e., Israel.

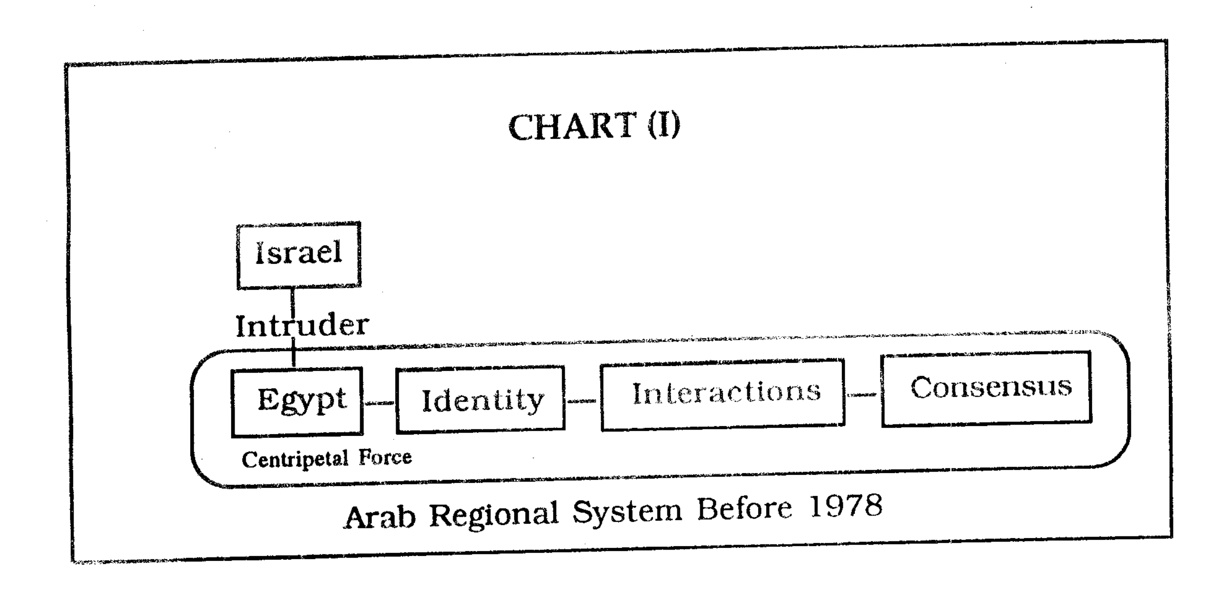
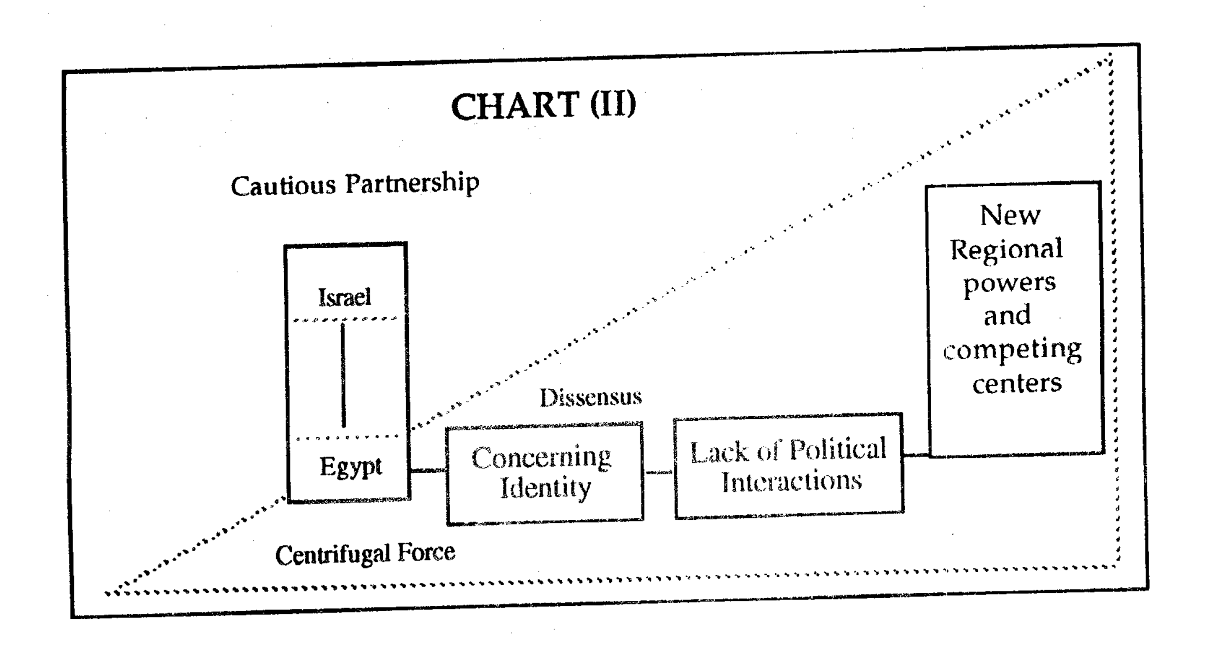
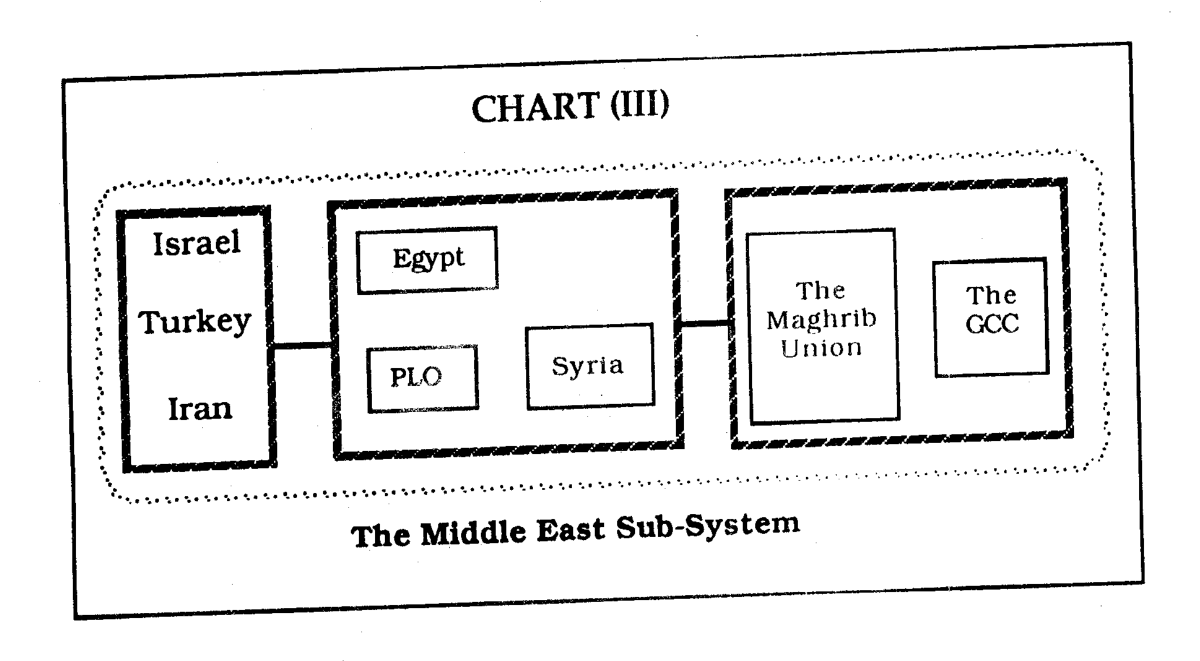


Chart II shows that between 1978 and 1990 things changed when rapprochement took place between Egypt and Israel. The Arab region was divided and the consensus was lost. The new Egyptian - Israeli interactions added to the divisions among the Arab states. Arab diplomatic relations with Egypt were severed and the League of Arab States was transferred to Tunisia. Questions regarding identity

and inter-Arab relations were raised. Other Arab states especially Iraq and Saudi Arabia did their best to replace Egypt as regional central powers. Sub-regional organizations such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Maghrib Union were established to compete with the League of Arab States. Hence, consensus regarding Arab issues was lost.

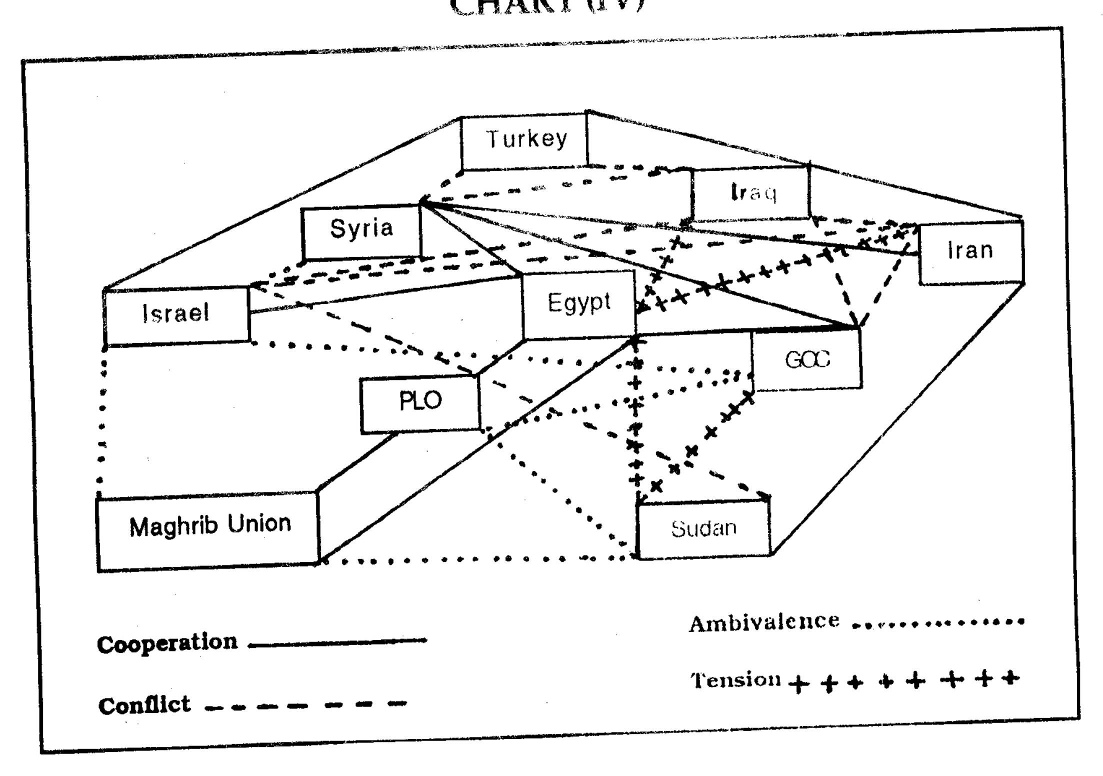


After the Palestinian - Israeli Accord of September 1993 the Arab regional system has witnessed debates digging into its structure, membership and functions. Chart III discloses some of the changes which reflect rethinking of the identity, e.g., Middle Eastern one, the inclusion of the three major former intruders, i.e., Israel, Iran and Turkey, and the shift from military and strategic interactions into economic, trade and cultural exchange.



It may be useful, then, to visualize the patterns of interactions among these actors as Chart IV shows :

CHART (IV)



Looking at Chart IV one may conclude the Following :

1) Cooperation in the region includes Iran and Turkey, Turkey and Israel, Turkey and Egypt, Egypt and PLO, Maghrib Union, Syria and GCC, PLO and Maghrib Union and Iran and Sudan.

2) Conflictual interactions include Iraq and Turkey, Iran, GCC, Syria and Israel, Israel and Syria, Iran, Sudan and PLO, and Syria with Israel, Iraq and Turkey.

3) Tense interactions exist between Egypt, Sudan, GCC, Iran, and Iraq.

4) Ambivalent interactions include those of Sudan, Maghrib Union, PLO, and Israel.

Consequently, regional conflicts have been reduced and cooperation is increasing to include former intruders into the Arab sub-system. This may legitimize the recent calls for the establishment of a Middle East Common Market which includes as members non-Arab countries such as Iran, Israel and Turkey. In this case, a shift from traditional stereotyped conflicts into new possibilities for regional cooperation is taking place. The concept of who is an adversary and who is a friend is exposed to thorough scrutiny. For example, Iraq has become the number one enemy to the GCC countries which have disclosed their willingness to interact with the Israelis and support the Palestinian - Israeli Accord.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, the subsequent Arab Summit in Cairo and the establishment of the international alliance, created a new conflictive environment in the Arab region. Inter-states conflicts were reinforced. A division was created along the lines of both wealth and poverty. Poor states such as Jordan, Yemen, Sudan, PLO, which is a non-state actor, sided with Iraq which advocated the redistribution of Arab wealth among Arab peoples. The Gulf rich states felt vulnerable to Arab brothers and called for international, especially western, protection. Egypt, one of the poor Arab states, took a strong stand with the gulf states in defence of the principle of non-intervention in others affairs and non-use of force. According to article (5) of the Charter of the league of Arab States "any resort to force in order to resolve disputes arising between two or more member states of the League is prohibited." Egypt as well as other Arab states which defended the liberation of Kuwait were in favor of resolving the Iraqi - Kuwaiti dispute peacefully within the Arab regional system.

The war against Iraq and the subsequent embargo against it created more cleavage to the existing conflicts among the Arabs and expand the level and dimension of inter-Arab conflicts. Look at the tension between Egypt and Sudan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Algeria ....etc. these are some manifestations of the second Gulf crisis. In addition intra-states conflicts increased as well. One may mention the civil war in Somalia, as well as the fatal conflict in Yemen.

-II-
TYPOLOGY OF THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICTS

In the Middle East we are not exposed to or confronted with one type of conflict. There are many categories, types and forms of conflicts according to the perspective of each analyst. However, there is a kind of consensus that the Arab - Israeli conflict is a protracted social conflict which is a conflict over identity, territory, survival and even the existence of the concerned parties.

Table I presents a classification of Middle East conflict according to their causes and types :

TABLE (I)

Type	Domestic			International		
Cause	Civil	Military	C/M	Legal	Military	Cultural
Borders				*	*	
Ethnic	*	*			*	*
Religion	*	*				*
Territory				*	*	
Resources			*	*	*	
Social & Political Inequality	*					
Arms Race			*		*	
Demographic Factors	*					*

What we witness is a mix of causes and types of conflicts which may be labelled open or explicit conflicts. They are conflicts which can be observed, analyzed and classified into domestic and/or international, though it is hard to have a clear cut demarcation lines between both. On the other hand, we did not mention latent conflicts, i.e., conflicts resulting from structural victimization, referred to as structural violence. This is the violence which results from the deformed socio-economic structures domestically and regionally. (Some include inadequate and deformed international structures as well)[2].

Any attempt to initiate a typology of conflicts in the Middle East is confronted by two major facts :

On one hand, there is strong belief in the Arab states that the Arab - Israeli conflict, and at its core the Palestinian - Israeli conflict, is the nucleus of all other conflicts in the Middle East. Hence, without resolving it, even in case of partial settlement, it will manifest itself somewhere, somehow, in some other forms. In other words, it perpetuates itself and its devastating consequences will last as long as the unjust, unfair and uneven environment continues to be uninterrupted. The interruption of the hostile course of interactions between the Palestinians, and hence the Arabs, on one hand and the Israelis on the other becomes inevitable. The resolution of this conflict will ease up - but not resolve - other regional conflicts. Its resolution will also help in decreasing the polarization in the area.

On the other hand, legal and political mechanisms of conflict resolution and crisis management do not exist as binding means to achieve reconciliation. Inspite of the fact that the Arab actors are members of the League of Arab States, however, the League does not have a legal institution such as a Court of Justice. Arab and Islamic countries, as well, as members of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) passed a resolution calling for the establishment of an International Islamic Court of Justice. However the resolution taken in 1987 has not materialized yet. Sub-regional councils such as the Maghrib Union, the Arab Cooperation Council, and the GCC proved totally ineffective in this regard. Negotiations, mediations, arbitrations, conciliations and utilization of good offices are rare to use in the Middle East. Consequently, states resort to force, especially military, as the first, not the last, resort in order to achieve their incompatible national interests. The inability to peacefully settle border, ethnic, religious, territorial, and socio-political conflicts within the regional setting prolonged and intensified both domestic and regional violence.

These two facts, which may not be unique to the conflicts in the Middle East, add to the complexity of conflict resolution in the area. They generate negative attitudes as well as rigid stereotypes and false consciousness among the competing parties in the Middle East.

As Table I shows, we can distinguish between the following causes of conflicts in the Middle East.

1- **Border Conflicts** : Which are wide spread among most of the states in the region both on the Arab side and in other Middle Eastern states. Border conflicts which are related to the demarcation process spoil the relationships between the Gulf States, between Egypt and Sudan, between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, between Iraq and Kuwait, Iraq and Iran, Turkey and Syria, and sometimes between Algeria and Morocco. Some of these disputes escalated into wars, really deadly wars, such as the Iraq - Iran war between 1980 - 1988. Others may escalate, once the bilateral and regional balance of power changes or if a kind of radical government comes to power in some states.

   The Gulf states, not having political or legal mechanisms to settle their border disputes, try to ignore the problem or utilize the good offices of the elders or offer some voluntary concessions without even negotiating the issue. This may work only in the short run and most probably will be hard to work out permanently. Other Arab states will resort to the use of force or at least threaten to use it in their interactions. No final solution to border conflicts is envisaged between the Arab states as long as there is no real mechanism for conflict resolution.

2- **Ethnic and Religious Conflicts** : The Middle East is characterized by the multiplicity of ethnic, religious and sectarians minorities as well as tribes. Competition over roles, resources, power and influence among these minorities turned the Middle East into intolerable hell. The conflict in Lebanon between 1975 - 1990, the civil war in South Yemen in 1986, the internal conflicts in Iraq, the devastating conflicts in Sudan are just examples of both explicit and latent conflicts which my escalate any minute and erupt into open wars.

As a matter of fact, some of these conflicts already escalated into wars. In Sudan, there is a disastrous war between the south and the north. The Southerners are fighting for their ethnic, religious and tribal identity. The conflict is between the need for self-determination on the one hand and the central authority on the other. As for the internal war in Yemen which took place in May 1994, we are confronted with absurd war. It is a war of cession which is linked mainly to the tribal structure and feud in the two sections of Yemen. The President of Yemen, a northern citizen, and the Vice President who is a Southern, agitated their constituencies against each other. They fought each other. In addition to these two examples, one may add the civil conflict in Somalia which led to the destruction of the state itself. The Somali tribes headed by their local leaders preferred the collapse of their state more than any compromise or reconciliation of differences.

One may argue that the concept of nation-state has been imposed on the tribal, ethnic and religious formations. This is contrary to what happened in Europe where the nation-state is the natural evolution of societal development and maturity. The super imposition of the state on the deformed and immature societal structures leads to the presence of dissatisfaction among alienated groups. They are always on alert to challenge the state authority in order to satisfy the tribal, religious and ethnic needs and requirements.

3- **Territorial Conflicts and Competition over Resources** : The Arab - Israeli conflict is well suited to such causes. It is a conflict over territories, resources and hence over sovereignty. Obviously, the territories allocated to the Jews according to the UN General Assembly resolution 181 of November 1947 were insufficient to the Israelis. They expanded their territory in 1948, 1967 and 1982 in order to acquire as much land and water as possible. Their perception of security is based on the assumption that territorial compromises may represent a threat to the survival of the Jewish state. However, they come to believe that peaceful interactions with their neighbors add more to their security than acquired territories. Hence, they accepted to negotiate with the Arabs over territorial compromises.

There is also the territorial dispute between Iran and the United Arab Emirates over the Gulf three islands, which are strategically located close to oil resources. It did not escalate because of the low profile diplomacy of the Arab state. However, nothing can guarantee the continuation of the status quo for any longer. As a matter of fact competition over resources has led to wars in the Middle East. In this case it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between borders and territorial conflicts on the one hand and conflicts over resources on the other. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent Gulf war is just an example of this complexity. In addition, there are some who deeply believe that, even if the Palestinian question is resolved another wave of regional conflicts, especially conflicts over resources such as water or minerals, may erupt. Water has always been an important source of life in the middle East. Its importance increased especially in Israel because of the Israeli settlements policy in the West Bank and Gaza. The Israelis diverted 805 of West Bank water to the settlements. They themselves started to blame the Israelis over emphasis on the settlements for the shortage of water and potential conflict over it(3).

Among the Arabs, Many conflicts and even inter-state wars took place in the last four decades due to disagreements and disputes over territories especially areas with potential resources. The conflict between Morocco and Algeria in the early 1960s, the conflict over Western Sahara, the conflict

between Egypt and Sudan over Halayeb, the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait over the neutral zone and conflicts between most of the Gulf states are just examples of inter-Arab conflicts over territories. Iraq accused Kuwait in 1990 of extracting oil from Iraqi oil fields and blamed both Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates for over producing and hence lowering the price of oil. This, according to Iraq, is considered an act of war against the Iraqi people who lost quite a sum of oil returns.

These accusation escalated into an invasion of Kuwait, an annexation and then to the war of liberation in January 1991. It is the war that created deadly consequences which still influence Arab inter-states politics.

4) **Socio-Economic and Political Causes of Conflict** : These causes may represent the most serious igniter of latent conflicts. Here we do not refer only to substantial economic causes of conflicts such as economic relative deprivation and lack of fair policies of income distribution, but we also refer to the inability of political systems to mobilize popular participation in politics, lack of institutionalization and the absence of rules for peaceful succession of power. Data for the percentage of income distribution is not available for most of the Arab and Middle East countries. However, it seems, especially in non-oil producing countries, that the gap between the rich and the poor is increasing. This creates

a serious problem of discontent and leads to dissatisfaction and strong tendencies towards violence. Many individuals as well as groups feel peripheral to the economic establishment and marginalized in the political system. Combined with the decline in political efficacy and growing social discontent, the economic gap creates dissatisfaction with the existing political systems. This, in absence of secular ideological alternatives, leads to social frustration and subsequent domestic violence. In addition, most of the governments in the Middle East are characterized by a high level of political corruption. There are certain biases built in the political system toward the inner circle of the ruling elite in both the recruitment and distribution processes. All these factors lead to a polluted environment which is conducive to conflict rather than cooperation. Fundamentalists, fanatics and terrorists as well as highly organized and mobilized religious groups are becoming more visible and more active in the politics of the Middle East. The inability of most states to take rational and effective economic and political reform policies, the fragile state apparatus and the weak civil non-governmental organizations limit the possibilities of domestic social equilibrium. What is left is soft states, weak enough to inspire domestic resistance. Furthermore, the new trend towards privatization causes more inequalities and the lack of government commitment to basic services may lead to more dissatisfaction and hence violence. Examples can easily be cited from Algeria, Egypt,

Sudan, Yemen, Iraq and may be others. In these cases, weak civil society organizations such as NGO's and intermediary agencies; e.g.; political parties, pressure and interest groups and both syndicate and unions, the absence of national ideological commitments and the inability of governments to mobilize public support to their policies led to the emergence of extremists. These groups are well organized and highly disciplined. They appeal to the public and have utilized the state's inability and inefficiency for counter attack.

Since people were not inclined to participate in government sponsored elections, the fundamentalists were able, through their strong and efficient communication lines, to mobilize the people to alarming degrees. They dominate most of the intermediary associations such as syndicates and bar associations. They also deeply penetrate the psyche of the people through the basic services they provide. The mosque is no longer only a place for praying. It has developed to be a center for basic services which the government was incapable to provide such as education, medical care, and financial support.

More important is the fact that the fundamentalists were able to penetrate the education system through both the educators and the curriculum. Their teachings and values were transmitted to the students through these mechanisms and other means such as tape cassettes.

Young people, alienated as a result of economic and political discrimination as well as unemployment, were easily co-opted by these groups. Both cooperation as well as recruitment were possible in the Arab states because most of them suffer from the problem of minorities. It was easy for the fundamentalists to agitate their supporters and sympathizers against two major targets, i.e., the state and the religious and ethnic minorities.

This conflict between the state on one hand and the fundamentalists on the other, raises two major questions :
First : What are the major sources of financial and moral support for these fanatic groups ?
Second : How can a certain minority protect itself and maintain its identity ?

There is a flow of financial transactions from certain Islamic countries to the extremists. Many workers in the Gulf states pay their annual alms giving to the Islamic NGO's which provide basic services to the Muslims. In addition, Arab entrepreneurs contribute to many Islamic organizations all over the world. They play the role of the Church in some countries.

The protection of the rights of minorities and nations without states such as the Kurds, the Negroes ...etc. has become a serious problem. On the one hand, nation-states in the

Middle East reject the concept of minority. They claim that they achieved high levels of integration. Hence, no calls for self-assertion of separate identities will be allowed. On the other hand, some of these minorities such as the Kurds and Negroes of Southern Sudan insist on their inalienable right of self-determination.

This escalation of extremis as well as radical and/or religious discrimination leads to an endless process of conflict, violence and counter violence.

It may be useful to indicate here, different types of minorities in the Arab countries :

1) Linguistic minorities (non-Arabic speaking) reach 29.7 million, i.e., 12.7% of the total population.

2) Religious minorities (non-Muslims) are about 15.7 million, i.e., 7.6% of the total population.

3) Islamic sectarian minorities (non-Sunnis) reach 18.6 Million, i.e., 8.8% of the total population.

4) Islamic minorities who are racially non-Arabs reach about 5.5 million, i.e., 3.7% of the total population.

This means that minorities represent more than 32% of the total population in the Arab world. This sizeable percentage requires real and fair treatment.

5) **Demographic Causes of Conflicts** : In the Middle East it is hard to separate the demographic factors from the socio-economic, ethnic, and religious dimensions. They are so interwoven that it may be difficult to distinguish which conflict is related to which cause. Take Lebanon as an example; how can we classify the civil conflict which lasted between 1975 - 1990; is it religious, ethnic or is it demographic based on the recent challenge to the distribution of political resources on the assumption that there is a certain demographic balance which characterizes the Lebanese society. Between 1943, when the National Covenant was agreed upon, and 1975, when the civil war started, the Muslims increased in numbers and consequently fought for their fair share of power. Other privileged groups resorted to force in order either to defend the status quo or divide the state into mini-states on the basis of religious demarcation lines[(4)].

In the Maghrib, Morocco and especially in Algeria, ethnic division among the population may create chances for civil conflicts. The Arabs are the dominant majority while the Berbers try to preserve their distinct cultural identity. Arabization meant not only fighting against French cultural values but also ending any non-Arab cultural values.

If demographic factors play a serious role in conflict escalation in Middle Eastern countries, it may be a source for future conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Table II distinguishes between different Israeli groups on one hand and the Palestinians on the other.

TABLE (II)

Palestinian and Israeli Population

The Palestinian			The Israelis		
1)	West Bank**	1,000,000	1)	Jews	4,175,000
2)	Gaza	750,000	2)	Arabs	700,000
3)	Jordan	1,530,000	3)	Others	215,000
4)	Syria	300,000			
5)	Lebanon	300,000			
6)	Saudi Arabia	200,000			
7)	UAE	86,000			
8)	Iraq	75,000			
9)	Egypt	35,000			
10)	Kuwait	35,000			
11)	Libya	27,000			
12)	Others	350,000			
	Total	4,688,000		Total (1991)	5,090,000

* Source, El Milagro De La Paz, Revista Espanola De Defensa, October 1993, pp. 60 - 67

** Including East Jerusalim

If we assume that the current negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis will lead to a peaceful settlement of their existing conflict, i.e.; conflict over occupied Palestinian territories, one may expect another type of

Palestinian - Israeli conflict. Demographic conflict plays an extremely sensitive role in formulating the perceptions, attitudes and positions of both parties of the conflict.

If we extend the demographic dimension to the Gulf states, we may be faced with conflicts in the future. Nationals in most of the Gulf states do not exceed 20 % of the total population, some of which are naturalized. Expatriates, Arabs, Asians and others form the majority of the population and the main bulk of the labor force in these states. They may not represent a threat to the security and stability of these states now, however, their presence puts limitations on the external behavior of the Gulf states, especially toward the labor exporting countries. These demographic dimensions proved relevant during the Kuwaiti crisis in 1990 - 1991 and the period that followed it. After the liberation of Kuwait (achieved by the forces of international alliance not the Kuwait or the Gulf forces) Kuwait started to organize the entry of expatriates in order to ensure some domestic balance.

For the Gulf states, as well as Israel, demographic factors play an extremely important role in the future stability and containment or escalation of regional conflicts.

6) **Arms Race** : Arms sales and arms acquisition represent a substantial source of conflict in the Middle East. As a result of the aforementioned causes and lack of confidence among the parties in the region, states compete in acquiring weapons of all kinds. Some states such as Israel, Iraq and Iran are competing in the area of weapons of mass destruction. The Israelis introduced nuclear weapons into an area of very traditional and primitive weapons. Inspite of the "butter vs. guns" dilemma, the Middle East states waste huge sums of money and human resources on arms purchase. Some estimate the annual arms sales to the Middle East in the range of $ 85 billion. This creates economic and social problems and reinforces the distrust among regional actors. It also opens avenues for external power intervention and in many cases agitates regional parties.

It is may belief that the vicious circle of arms race and distrust led to conflicts which accelerate arms race and so on ....

Table III reflects the costs and casualties resulting from conflicts in the Middle East between 1984 - 1991.

(TABLE III)

COSTS AND CASUALTIES RESULTING FROM CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST BETWEEN 1984 - 1991.

Type of Conflict	Casulties	Cost in US $ Millions	Number of Displased
1) External			
Arab-Israeli	200,000	300	3,000,000
Iraqi-Iran	600,000	300	1,000,000
2nd Gulf War	120,000	650	1,000,000
Others	20,000	50	1,000,000
Total	**940,000**	**1,300**	**6,000,000**
2) Internal			
Sudan	600,000	20	4,000,000
Iraq	300,000	20	1,000,000
Lebanon	180,000	50	1,000,000
N. Yemen	100,000	5	500,000
Syria	30,000	0.5	150,000
Morocco	20,000	3	100,000
W. Sahara	10,000	0.2	50,000
Somalia	20,000	0.3	200,000
Others	30,000	1	300,000
Total	**1,290,000**	**100**	**7,300,000**
All Conflicts	**2,230,000**	**1,400,000**	**13,300,000**

* Source : Saad El-Din Ibrahim, Sects, Ethnicity and Minority groups in the Arab World, Ibn Khaldon Center, 1994, p. 16.

We can add to the aforementioned casualties and costs the most recent Yemeni internal conflict. The economic loss exceeds US $ 10 billion, while the number of deaths is about 40 thousand, in addition to tens of thousands of wounded persons.

-III-
DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL COOPERATION : MECHANISM OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Political and economic development as well as regional cooperation are the contrary of conflict and animosity in the area. As review of the theoretical literature and the European experience of development and regional cooperation after World War II reveals that animosity, conflict and hatred will be decreased and minimized through the process of joint cooperation and community building.

TABLE IV
Basic Data of Key Players in the Middle East

Data / Actors	Population in Millions	GNP Per Capita	Economic Growth %	Military in (1000)	Life Expec.	Gov. Expend on Defence %
		A) ARAB ACTORS				
Algiers	27.3	1980	3.5	121.7	65.1	n.a.
Egypt	57.9	610	2.8	430	60.3	12.7
Iraq	19.7	n.a.	-.30	382	65.0	n.a.
PLO	3.8	1800	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Saudi Arabia	16.4	7820	4.5	101	64.5	n.a.
Sudan	29.1	n.a.	-.11	72.8	50.8	13.2
Syria	14.5	1160	6.5	408	66.1	31.8
		B) NON-ARAB ACTORS				
Iran	56.0	2170	8.5	473	65.0	9.6
Israel	5.0	11950	6.4	176	76.0	22.4
Turkey	56.0	1780	5.5	480	67.0	10.4

A. Source : Arab Economic Report 1992
The Military Balance 1992/1993
World Development Report 1993

B. Including 700,000 Palestinians with Israeli Nationality

C. Estimate

D. Upper Middle Income Range Between $2,500 and $6,340

In the Middle East, the Major actors shown in table IV may be candidates for regional cooperation. In addition, they are the ones in need for domestic development both economic and political. It is known that development means the mobilization of national resources including human resources for national goals. It also means an equal opportunity for all domestic forces both in the economic sector and political life. Economic and political development means the institutionalization of the system, the peaceful succession of power and people's participation in the decision-making process. This entails the establishment of domestic consensus regarding the transformation of regimes from non-party systems to liberal, multiparty systems. It is also a call for the respect of the rights of minorities and human rights of all citizens.

Economic development means the reallocation of national resources toward building a modern, advanced and strong economy in order to respond to the expectations and needs of the people. This process requires the mobilization of national resources as well as external ones, both regional and international aid. For example, the Palestinian - Israeli Accord of September 13th , 1993 contains appendices concerning mutual development as well as regional cooperation projects. It calls for regional, as well as international financial support for the reconstruction of Gaza and the West Bank. What Middle Eastern states, especially Arab states, need is a well defined development strategy capable of not only enhancing the standard of living but also improving the quality of life. In this regard, governments need to increase their expenditures on welfare and

services and decrease those directed to military aspects.

On the other hand, regional development and joint cooperation in the fields of economy and politics require confidence building measures in order to bridge the gap between the Arab states on the one hand and other regional powers on the other. Table IV shows how Turkey, Iran and Israel are achieving better results in economic growth, life expectancy and other economic and social indicators. For the Arabs, regional cooperation raises fears of domination and hegemony from neighboring states. Instead of creating chances for cooperation, regionalism, especially outside the borders of the Arab sub-system, may represent threats to the already shaky regional balances.

The goal of multilateral negotiations in the framework of the ongoing peaceful settlement is to build confidence among the involved actors. The negotiations deal with major regional issues such as refugees, regional economic development, arms of mass destruction, water and environment. Regional cooperation in these five critical area, which are sources of future conflicts, is aimed at creating an environment conducive to a stable and secure life.

CONCLUSION

The shift from a conflictive environment and the warriors mentality into peace oriented attitudes, though important, is extremely difficult to achieve. Besides the requirements of substantial needs and the need for the distribution of resources, both political and economic, there is a dire need for more cooperative and peaceful attitudes among the people in the area. Cooperative and peaceful attitudes can only be formed through the socialization process in each state. This requires a change in the education curriculum, mass media and other cultural values. It also requires the initiation of exchange programs and visits between the peoples of the area. Common and joint goals for the region may help as well.

One lesson we may learn from the Middle East conflicts is that, the burden and cost of animosity are unbearable. They cause disintegration, affect loyalty and national consensus, waste national rare resources, and lead to deadly wars. The opportunity cost of Middle conflicts is tremendous and countless.

In the Middle East, people have not yet experienced a life without tension and conflict. However, people yearn for a better quality of life. This can be achieved through mutual understanding and joint goals in the region.

The relationship between conflict and development is not a linear one. Development does not lead automatically to peace and intimacy. If the goal is to shift from conflictive interactions to a cooperative and peaceful environment, development, both economic and political, should bring with it mechanisms for equal distribution and fair participation. Equal opportunities in each of the Middle East countries as well as among states themselves may represent a safety valve for the permanent peace which people need. In this case development, especially regional development, leads to conflict resolution in the Middle East. This means not only regional cooperation projects but also regional areas of sharing internal and external resources such as foreign aid. The dominance of compromise and a give and take strategy is a prerequisite to reach a cooperative environment in the Middle East.

END NOTES

1) Bernard Reich, Israel : Land of Tradition and Conflict, Colorado : Westview, 1985, 53.

2) All Literature concerning dependency can be cited here.

3) The Jerusalem Post, Jan. 4, 1991 (What to do about Water).

4) What can added to the domestic sources of conflict is the position taken by other regional powers, such as Syria, Iraq, Israel, Iran and others.

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